



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240



MAY 25 2005

Fred Skaer  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of NEPA Facilitation  
800 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Skaer:

The Department of the Interior would like to re-affirm its long-standing policy regarding review documents associated with environmental and project reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other statutes. Since the passage of NEPA in 1970, Interior has consistently requested that agencies supply multiple copies of review documents to this office. This relieves your agency of having to determine which Interior bureau(s) should be involved in a particular review, maintain lengthy mailing list, and attempt to discern Interior's position among several bureau comment letters. Under our process, your agency will receive only one letter representing the views and comments of the Department of the Interior.

We are enclosing material describing our review process and the number of copies needed for certain types of reviews. Please distribute this throughout your agency to all persons developing NEPA and project related review documents. We further recommend that you distribute this enclosure periodically or incorporate it into your procedures so that new personnel will become informed of Interior's requirements. Our environmental review distribution requirements are also available on our web site at: <http://www.doi.gov/oepe/nrm.html>, or [http://www.doi.gov/oepe/REO\\_list.doc](http://www.doi.gov/oepe/REO_list.doc).

We would also like to note that these review copies may be supplied in CD-ROM if available in that format. In those cases, please supply one paper copy and the balance of the multiple copies in CD-ROM. Further, if the document is available on the Internet, please supply one paper copy and the location (URL) on the Internet where the document can be found.

An identical letter has been sent to other Federal NEPA contacts. If you should have any questions about this process, please contact Vijai Rai, Team Leader, Natural Resources Management at 202-208-6661.

Sincerely,

*for Mary Jane Blanchard*  
Willie R. Taylor, Director  
Office of Environmental Policy  
and Compliance

Enclosure

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS**

May 2005

In order to expedite requests to the Department of the Interior for the review of environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act; project planning, design, and application documents under various Federal authorities; and requests for coordination and consultation early in project planning; please note the following.

Appendix III to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations (49 FR 49778; December 21, 1984) lists the Director, Office of Environmental Project Review (now the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance), as the individual responsible for receiving and commenting on other agencies' environmental documents. If properly followed, this process results in your agency receiving one set of comments on behalf of the Department. Therefore, please send all officially approved documents requesting environmental and other project review to the following address for review and comment by the Department of the Interior:

Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
Department of the Interior  
Main Interior Building, MS 2342  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

It is unnecessary to send copies of environmental and other project review requests to any other bureau or office within Interior. However, a sufficient number of copies must be sent to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) to allow distribution of the document to those Interior bureaus being requested to participate in the review. The requested numbers of copies allow for simultaneous review throughout each bureau thus producing the Department's consolidated review in the shortest possible time. A review can be initiated with less than the stated number, but this may lead to a longer review time. The following numbers of copies should be provided:

Twelve (12) copies of a draft and six (6) copies of a final document for projects in the Eastern United States including MN, IA, MO, AR, and LA. The same numbers of copies should be provided for projects in AS, GU, HI, PR, VI, and the Trust Territories.

Eighteen (18) copies of a draft and nine (9) copies of a final document for projects in the Western United States westward of the western boundaries of MN, IA, MO, AR, and LA.

Eighteen (18) copies of a draft and nine (9) copies of a final document for review requests which are national in scope (e.g. agency regulations, scientific reports, special reports, program plans, and other interagency documents).

Sixteen (16) copies of a draft and eight (8) copies of a final document for projects in AK.

When a review document does not have draft and final versions, the larger number of copies is requested.

Copies of environmental and project review documents that are available in CD-ROM, on the Internet, or by any other widely used electronic method may be furnished in lieu of paper copies. When this is the case, we would still appreciate receiving one paper copy for our official file. Please provide the CDs or the Internet address to this office.

Appendix II to the CEQ regulations (49 FR 49754; December 21, 1984) lists Interior bureaus and offices with jurisdiction by law or special expertise on environmental quality issues. Appendix II should be used to determine appropriate Interior contacts for coordination during early planning, NEPA scoping, and other preliminary activities. Since this document is out of date, it is recommended that one consult the following Internet address for the latest bureau contacts. <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm> or <http://www.doi.gov/oepe/nepacontacts.html>.

All early coordination and scoping requests, environmental assessments or reports not accompanied by project planning or design documents, findings of no significant impact, preliminary or working draft or final environmental impact statements, and similar material of a regional nature should be sent directly to Interior bureaus at the field level. It is not necessary to send copies of these documents to the OEPC in Washington, DC. Please note that our Regional Environmental Officers (REO) serve as representatives of OEPC and should be contacted if there are any questions about these procedures at the field level. An REO list is attached.

Representatives of your organization should establish direct working relationships with Interior's field level offices, which welcome such contact. This type of relationship is important not only during early project coordination, but also to expedite the early resolution of environmental issues that would otherwise surface during the formal review of a project document. In many cases, Interior's comments on an environmental review will designate an office at the field level for follow-up activities.

We recommend that you make a wide distribution of this information within your organization. Such a distribution will greatly assist our agencies in better meeting our obligations under existing laws and in planning projects that will be mutually beneficial.

Attachment (REO List)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
**OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY and COMPLIANCE**  
**REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICES**

**DIRECTOR**

**WILLIE R. TAYLOR**

1849 C STREET, NW, MS 2342, WASHINGTON, DC 20240 PHONE 202-208-3891/FAX 202- 208-6970  
January 28, 2005-

**BOSTON - CT, MA ME, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT**

**Andrew L. Raddant**

Diane Lazinsky

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**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

**MARY JOSIE BLANCHARD**

**Phone 617-223-8565**

**Fax: 617-223-8569**

408 Atlantic Avenue, Room 142  
Boston, MA 02210-3334

**PHILADELPHIA - DC, DE, IL, IN, MD, MI, MN, OH, PA, VA, WI, WV**

**Michael T. Chezik**

Robert M. Burr

Valincia Darby

**Phone: 215-597-5378**

**FAX: 215-597-9845 (Primary)**  
**215-597-5012 (Alternate)**

Custom House, Room 244  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

**ATLANTA - AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, PR, TN, SC, VI**

**Gregory L. Hogue**

Joyce A. Stanley

**Phone: 404-331-4524**

**FAX: 404-331-1736**

Russell Federal Building,  
Suite 1144  
75 Spring Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303

**ALBUQUERQUE - AR, LA, NM, OK, TX**

**Stephen R. Spencer**

Shirley Martinez

**Phone: 505-563-3572**

**FAX: 505-563-3066**

P.O.Box 26567, (MC-9)  
Albuquerque, NM 87125-6567  
1001 Indian School NW, Suite 348  
Zip 87104)

**DENVER - CO, IA, KS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY**

**Robert F. Stewart**

Barbara M. Schmalz

Diane Niedzwiecki

**Phone: 303-445-2500**

**FAX: 303-445-6320**

P.O. Box 25007 (D-108)  
Denver Federal Center  
Denver, CO 80225-0007  
(Bldg. 56, Rm. 1003, 6<sup>th</sup> & Kipling)

**OAKLAND - AS, AZ, CA, CM, GU, HI, NV**

**Patricia Port**

Harry (Chip) E. Demarest

John A. Perez

**Phone: 510-817-1477**

**FAX: 510-419-0177**

Jackson Center One  
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 520  
Oakland, CA 94607

**PORTLAND - ID, OR, WA**

**Preston A. Sleeper**

Trisha Allison O'Brien

Mandy Sanford

**Phone: 503-231-6157**

**Fax: 503-231-2361**

500 NE Multnomah Street  
Suite 356  
Portland, OR 97232-2036

**ANCHORAGE - AK**

**Pamela A. Bergmann**

Douglas L. Mutter

**Marinell J. Kukis**

**Phone: 907-271-5011**

**Fax: 907-271-4102**

1689 C Street, Room 119  
Anchorage, AK 99501-5126